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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 EB-08 /079 W
----------084774 280235Z /70
R 270330Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3518
INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 1150

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PP
SUBJECT: OPPOSITION RE-UNITES. POLITICAL MANUEVERING
INTENSE

1. SUMMARY: UNITED PARTY REGULARS, WHO LOST OPPOSITION LEADERSHIP TO IAMBAKEY OKUN'S PEOPLES UNITED FRONT (PUF), HAVE JOINED OPPOSITION COALITION, MARKING PUF LARGEST BLOC IN PARLIAMENT. PUF HAS PICKED UP STRENGTH SINCE CREATION AND CONVINCED IT CAN WIN CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT. BALANCE, HOWEVER, RESTS WITH JULIUS CHAN'S PEOPLES PROGRESS PARTY (PPP) WHICH PM SOMARE EXPECTS TO KILL LEADERSHIP CODE BUT REMAIN WITH PANGU IN GOVERNMENT COALITION. ALL PARTIES INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATIONS OUTCOME OF WHICH STILL UNPREDICTABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. UNITED PARTY (UP) SPOKESMAN RAPHAEL DOA ANNOUNCED JULY 26 THAT HIS PARTY HAD DECIDED TO JOIN THE OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED OPPOSITION COALITION, PEOPLES' UNITED FRONT (PUF), LED BY IAMBAKEY OKUK. AUGMENTED PUF, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES PAPUA BESENA, (PB), THUS BECOMES LARGEST BLOC IN PARLIAMENT, CONTROLLING AN ESTIMATED 46 VOTES. PRIME
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MINISTER SOMARE'S PANGU PATI BELIEVED TO HAVE 42 VOTES, INCLUDING THREE BOUGAINVILLANS AND THREE MATAUNGANS. WHILE MOST PARTY AFFILIATIONS SHAKY AT BEST, PANGU MOST VULNERABLE IN THAT ITS 42 VOTES INCLUDE 11 INDEPENDENTS WHO VOTED FOR SOMARE FOR PM BUT WHOSE LOYALTIES DOUBTFUL.

3. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CHAN'S PEOPLES PROGRESS PARTY

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(PPP) PROBABLY COUNT ON 20 VOTES (109TH MEMBER IS SPEAKER), THUS HOLDING THE SWING VOTE NEEDED BY SOMARE TO CONTINUE IN POWER OR BY PUF TO GAIN CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT.

4. OKUK HAS PICKED UP STRENGTH BEYOND EXPECTATIONS SINCE HE SPLIT UP AND GOT PAPUA BESENA TO ALLY ITSELF WITH HIM. OBSERVERS WONDERED IF PB, TRADITIONALLY OPPOSED TO ALL POLITICAL COALITIONS, WOULD BE A RELUCTANT ALLY. INSTEAD, PB HAS MOVED INTO OFFICE SPACE OF OPPOSITION LEADER AND IS WORKING HAND IN GLOVE WITH PUF. RECENT BY-ELECTIONS (PORT MORESBY 1110) ADDED TWO SEATS TO PUF COALITION AT PPP EXPENSE AND NOW THE ALIENATED SEGMENT OF UP HAS JOINED COALITION AS WELL - AND PUT PUF ONLY ABOUT NINE VOTES SHORT OF PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

5. UP PARLIAMENTARIAN TOLD CHARGE' JULY 26 THAT PANGU MINISTER FOR DECENTRALIZATION, FATHER MOMIS, HAD OFFERED TO JOIN IN FORMING A GOVERNMENT, BRINGING TEN VOTES WITH HIM. HE WAS TOLD TO DELIVER BY JULY 25, WHEN UP DECIDED TO JOIN PUF AND DID NOT. ACCORDING TO MP, MOMIS NOW REQUESTING UNTIL MONDAY, AUGUST 1, TO DELIVER PROMISED VOTES BUT BEING TOLD HE COULD JOIN ONLY ON PUF TERMS. AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION BELIEVES MOMIS ACTING AS FRONT-RUNNER FOR SOMARE. UP REP ALSO SAID PARTY MEETING WITH CHAN'S REPS. ANY COMBINATION OF COALITIONS CONCEIVABLE.
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6. AT THIS POINT WE SEE NO WAY FOR LEADERSHIP CODE TO PROSPER AS IT OPPOSED BY BOTH PUF AND PPP. HOWEVER, HOLDING TOGETHER GOVERNMENT COALITION FAR MORE IMPORTANT. SENIOR SOMARE ADVISOR SAID PM NOT WORRIED. HE WILL SUBMIT LEADERSHIP CODE TO VOTE OF CONSCIENCE AND IS TELLING HIS PEOPLE HE WILL BE GLAD WHEN THE WHOLE THING IS OVER AND THEY CAN GET DOWN TO WORK AGAIN (COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO HIS PUBLIC POSTURE). SAME SOURCE SAID SOMARE CERTAIN PPP, AFTER VOTING AGAINST CODE, WILL RETURN TO GOVERNMENT FOLD. PM HAS SAID, "JULIUS (DPM CHAN) WOULD NEVER LET ME DOWN".

7. IN SUMMARY, ONLY THINGS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR AT THIS POINT ARE THAT FORMAL OPPOSITION HAS GAINED STRENGTH AND ALL PARTIES ARE LOOKING FOR COALITIONS OF FORCES, WHICH APPARENTLY HAVE NOT YET COALESCED.
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